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Personal sensitivity and self-understanding are attributes which are very important for those who would teach the disadvantaged. "Sensitivity training" is recommended as a basis for self-discovery and self-actualization. Through such training the teacher can foster a climate in which a disadvantaged child can feel "valued, wanted, and worthy." Sensitivity training in teacher education classes may use such approaches as circle seating for discussions, minimal use of structured lectures and assigned readings, and inclusion of films, resource persons, and role playing in the course. An understanding of the nature of prejudice is important for development of accepting attitudes, and creative expression may also be used in sensitivity training. (NH)

An Appeal for Teacher Sensitivity. . .

More Tender Hearts

by Clara and Morey Appell

To Communicate

WHEREVER IT occurs on earth, to reach the heart of another is to communicate. Whatever the language or geographical location, first there must be a meeting of hearts before the mind can be stirred, can hear, and genuinely can learn. At a historical moment when we have accepted the challenge of reexamining the meaning of a public education which reaches *all*, there is generally greater concern about our capacity to communicate effectively and learn the whole child.

In recent years, "sensitivity training" has come to be a descriptive phrase referring to efforts devoted toward helping individuals to enhance their capacity to sense, to feel, and hopefully to understand more about themselves as well as others. Participants in such sensitivity education activities are encouraged to explore their own perceived impressions of self and to attempt to capture the meaning of the perceived impressions experienced by others.

Increasingly "sensitivity training" has become recognized as worthwhile for those who would help disadvantaged children in meaningful ways. Essentially for us, helping those who teach to grow in sensitivity suggests the emergence of "more tender hearts." We suggest the "tender hearts" in the hope that it will convey the special quality of one who is capable of experiencing and conveying a feeling of "caring" or a "valuing" relationship with each child.

Those who work theoretically and actively to assist others to achieve "tender hearts" have found themselves selectively focusing on efforts to elicit for the participants the achievement of a reasonable degree of self-understanding, increasing self-

awareness, desire for self-knowledge, and hopefully a greater acceptance of self. With the personal exploration of self, there appears to be the possibility of an enriched appreciation of one's strengths as well as a more realistic acceptance and understanding of one's frailties. This intimate journey into one's selfhood then appears to help the traveler to feel more able to experience identity with others. As we come to know ourselves more fully, it becomes increasingly possible to feel closer to others.

The quest for self-knowledge was given voice by Socrates about 2,000 years ago when he advised, "Know thyself." Nor is self-awareness a purely philosophic quest. It is an effort written large in the poetry, drama, literature, and religion of humanity. Almost anywhere one touches, Sophocles, Shakespeare, John Milton, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others, one comes upon the quest for meaning of self. Within this century, Sigmund Freud's magnificent effort to explore the impact of the unconscious forces was predicated upon a belief in the assumption that man could come to achieve greater rationality and thus control of himself. More recent behavioral scientists focusing on self and self-knowledge have included Arthur Jersild, Abraham Maslow, Lawrence S. Kubie, and Carl R. Rogers. In diverse ways, and out of differing theoretical orientations, each of these scholars accepts the powerful import of self-understanding in the educative process.

Compassion for Self and Others

Varying life experiences appear to imbue some persons with a seemingly natural sensitivity for self and others. Those of us not so fortunate may find beneficial a more directed group effort. The more sensitive individual may find some meaningful value in the sharing within a group that can help him to see he is not alone. At times one's personal sensitivity can be understood better and appreciated for the depth of experiencing it can help elicit in compassionate concern for others. The overly sensitive person may come to discover clues about possible origins and worthwhile ef-

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Trade Books with Rural Settings

Title	Author	Publisher	Level ^a
<i>ABC of Buses</i>	Shuttleworth	Doubleday	P
<i>Autumn Harvest</i>	Tresselt	Lothrop, Lee, and Shephard	P
<i>Blueberry Pie</i>	Floethe	Scribner	P
<i>Brown Cow Farm</i>	Ipcar	Doubleday	P
<i>Burgess Book of Nature Lore</i>	Burgess	Little	LE
<i>D. J.'s Worst Enemy—</i> setting in rural Georgia	Burch	Viking	LE
<i>Doll for Lily Belle</i>	Snow	Houghton Mifflin	LE
<i>Farmer in the Dell</i>	Hader	Macmillan Company	P
<i>Fly Away Goose</i>	Lasel	Houghton Mifflin	P
<i>I Know a Farm</i>	Collier	Scott, William R.	P
<i>In the Middle of the Night</i>	Fisher	Crowell	P
<i>One Horse Farm</i>	Ipcar	Doubleday	P
<i>Pocketfull of Crickets</i>	Caudill	Holt, Rinehart, and Winston	P
<i>Rabbit Hill</i>	Lawson	Viking	LE
<i>Skinny—</i> a setting in rural Georgia	Burch	Viking	LE
<i>Spring is Like the Morning</i>	Craig	Putnam	P
<i>Sum Up</i>	Tresselt	Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard	P
<i>Wake Up Farm</i>	Tresselt	Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard	P

^a Code: P for primary; LE for later elementary

More Tender Hearts

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forts "to cope" more constructively with his feelings.

As yet, as far as we know, there is no one particular theory and approach that can be construed as most valid scientifically. Our own interpretation of "sensitivity training" accepts as basic the development of a climate that allows and encourages the emergence of significant self-discovery. Traditional course content coverage of specialized subject matter does not automatically guarantee competency in effective communication with the child. Certainly the teacher needs to possess a functional body of knowledge. But, perhaps first and foremost, the teacher needs to feel able to understand the child. Intellect and emotions are not necessarily concomitant partners. To care for another, teachers need to be helped to understand themselves better.

Each Child Has Intrinsic Value

Fundamental to a democracy there is the basic belief that each and every human being, indeed every child, is worthy and possesses intrinsic value. The natural laws of development provide the prenatal babe with his own timetable for growth to prepare him to make ready for his journey to earth. From conception, his organismic uniqueness is established and affected by his mother's general health and emotional ability to welcome him. After birth, he is totally dependent upon others for his very survival. But his nature and nur-

ture cannot be separated easily as they become intertwined during the very earliest development. Long before he can speak the words of his people he learns the "emotional language" conveyed to him in his experiences felt and perceived with those who care for him. Out of the "touch" of caring hands, out of the sounds felt from the voices relating to him, he will build his earliest feelings of worth and trust.

Later when he goes to school, his teacher will represent another important person in his expanding world. What he brings to school and in turn what he takes home from school are dependent upon what his past experiences have allowed him to become. He is *culture bound* and can become only what his composite experiences permit him to utilize as his foundation for continued learning.

Teachers through the ages have enjoyed working with children who learn easily, who respond quickly. These children have been referred to as "bright" or "alert" or "smart." Too frequently, children from impoverished homes have been at a disadvantage in their readiness to respond to school and have appeared "slow" or "retarded" or "unresponsive." In recent years a more understanding concern is evidenced by designation acknowledging causative factors related to problem learners. Admittedly we evidence an increased awareness of the need to understand when we re-

fer to these children as "the culturally deprived" or the "under-achievers."

Too often we have spoken of such children as the "hard-to-reach," and often the truth has been that we have not tried hard enough to reach them. It is not that teachers have chosen deliberately to avoid reaching these children. More accurately teachers have not been helped to understand and to learn how to reach these youngsters. About ninety percent of our teachers come from the middle class group. One in three children in many of our larger cities represent the "culturally deprived."

The majority of teachers have had little help in their college courses and experiences with regard to achieving a workable understanding of the disadvantaged child. Most texts provide a middle class focus and the child is expected to fit into the assumed middle class oriented world taken for granted by most teachers. Unprepared for a middle class world, unless his teacher learns how to reach him, he does not come to utilize his potentialities adequately. To want to learn, the child needs to feel *valued, wanted, and worthy*. The teacher who conveys faith in him as a person of worth with his own ability to grow may inspire him to want to learn how to be his very best self.

Encouragement of Growth of Self

Essentially, to assist and encourage in the ongoing discovery of self, there appears to be some similarity of the growth facilitating conditions desirable in child and adult. The individual needs to feel himself fully confirmed by the persons who represent the "significant others" in his life. Teachers, as guiding persons, are a vital group of "significant others" in the lives of many of their students (regardless of age).

A climate which conveys an accepting atmosphere, a non-judgmental as well as a non-threatening situation, appears to free each person to be his most authentic self. In such a setting, a child or adult generally is freed to actualize himself most fully, creatively, and productively. He comes to experience more faith in himself and in turn greater trust in others. With his emerging trust, he finds his own self-respect enhanced and comes to feel more identity and respect for others. His more appreciative attitudes of self and others allow him to come to grips with the differences that prevail within the human race. Occasionally, he may even be able to deal more adequately with those barriers that can separate him from others in his ongoing experiences. His capacity "to listen to" and "to feel with" another may increase

significantly. He may be better able to learn how "to cope" more adequately with his frustrations and even eventually how to channel his indignations with regard to injustices he recognizes.

Approaches Utilized

Through the years each of us has valued efforts to assist students to build increased sensitivity and "more tender hearts." Whether in the setting of a college classroom for undergraduates or a community group, we have found a variety of approaches helpful at different times. Generally we favor a circle seating arrangement. We prefer the face-to-face setting that we believe encourages increased listening to one another in a group. Every effort is encouraged to convey that each member is valued for himself with whatever contribution he considers appropriate no matter how agreeable or divergent. A belief in the right of each individual to participate in his own unique way justifies our lack of urging active verbal participation by all. There are times when "listening" participation can be especially meaningful to some. The absence of pressure permits each person to belong in the way appropriate for that person. There is an attempt, however, to try to be aware of "the gentle look" that communicates a readiness to talk.

Structured lectures are used to a minimum. Very frequently student questions, concerns, and challenges are utilized as an opening for a meeting. Meaningful films that challenge thinking, problem solving, and exploration of feelings and attitudes are included. Some especially functional films that appear to be moving and spark emergence of significant kinds of awareness and insights for students (who teach or are to teach) are recommended. Some of these are *Children Without*, *Harvest of Shame*, *Children of Change*, *The Quiet One*, *Portrait of a Disadvantaged Child*, and others.

There may or may not be specific assigned readings depending upon the nature of the group participants. Generally we encourage self-initiated study and find that students read as much as when assignments are specific. Some related fictional readings are recommended. In addition to the above, at varied times we have utilized resource persons, tapes, reading of challenging excerpts, role playing and puppets, tape recordings, bulletin boards, and trips.

As part of our relationship with groups, we encourage exploration of the meaning of prejudice (defined simply as "pre-judge"). Students have

come to see with honesty and integrity how subtle is the learning of prejudice and how necessary to learn to face it, understand it, and hopefully work towards its resolution for improved relationships. In the area of racial prejudice some specific readings have been recommended. Among these considered illuminating are *The Nature of Prejudice*, *Glass House of Prejudice*, *A Nation of Immigrants*, and *A Profile of the Negro American*.

Creative Expression

Creative expression and autobiographical reflections are encouraged in sensitivity training for those who wish to explore in these directions. Occasionally some have chosen to try out original efforts in painting, music, written drama, and poetry. Each student's contribution is respected and when desired material is considered totally confidential. With student permission creative efforts are sometimes shared with an entire group and when preferred or advisable, anonymously.

We are convinced that "More Tender Hearts" have been emerging and that teachers are gathering strength in this joint adventure to "reach" all. Each one of us can join in this national challenge to help children discover the wonder and joy in the world of learning.

One young teacher granted us permission to share her poem conveying her feelings to reach every child. Anne Sisler wrote:

EMPATHY

How can I tell you of the
beauty of the night
When you have only seen the
splendor of the day?
Traverse with me in darkness
And you shall know
That which in light
Lies so clear.
People it is of whom I speak,

People whose beating hearts
Struggle in the flickering twilight,
Whose burdens are born
With strength and courage,
Whose lingering hopes
Point toward tomorrow's radiance.
Find in me the beauty of your day
So that I, too, may live in dignity.

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The Child Development Center: A Program to Provide Children a "Head Start" in Life and Implications for Primary Education

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most inhuman output of energy. In other words, strides forward are made only when some of us not only give up our complacency but also are not afraid to subject ourselves to the accusations of being glory-seekers, money-spenders, and "way-outers" (although you may feel "way-out" when someone asks you to take a secondary mathematics teacher or a third generation elementary teacher and make a child development specialist and early childhood teacher out of them in six days!). There

is no doubt that it takes "way-out" courage to ask for the time and money it takes to implement new ideas.

Basic Assumptions Underlying the Child Development Center Concept

What are some of these costly ideas about development? The ideas may not be new, ideas which educators have not been knowledgeable enough or vociferous enough about to sell to public

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